B

# **DECISION AND ORDER**

### OF THE

# **BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY**

# **DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

<u>.</u>			W181, is hereby adopted as the nent of Consumer Affairs. An e	ffective
date of July 8	-	, 2000 has been assigned to this Decision and Order.		
Made this 8th	day of	June	, 2000.	

Martin R. Greenberg, Ph.D.
President, Board of Psychology
Department of Consumer Affairs

D. Post

BILL LOCKYER, Attorney General 1 of the State of California ALFREDO TERRAZAS (SBN 78403) 2 Deputy Attorney General 3 California Department of Justice 1515 Clay Street, 20th Floor Oakland, California 94512 4 Telephone: (510) 622-2220 5 Attorneys for Complainant 6 7 **BEFORE THE** 8 **BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY** 9 DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS STATE OF CALIFORNIA 10 11 In the Matter of the Accusation Against: Case No. W 181 12 DAVID LAWRENCE POST, Ph.D. STIPULATION, WAIVER 2723 Crow Canyon Road, Suite 209 AND ORDER THEREON 13 San Ramon, CA 94583 14 License No. PSY 7886, 15 Respondent. 16 17 18 IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED by and between David Lawrence Post, Ph.D., 19 (hereinafter "respondent") and his attorney David M. Galie, and the Board of Psychology (hereinafter "Board") by and through its attorney Alfredo Terrazas, Deputy Attorney General, as 20 21 follows: Accusation No. W 181 is presently pending before the Board. A copy of 22 1. 23 said Accusation is attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by reference. 2. Respondent is represented by David M Galie, Attorney at Law, of the 24 firm, FREEMAN & GALIE. 25 3. Respondent understands the nature of the charges and allegations in 26 Accusation No. W 181 as constituting cause for discipline upon him and has had them explained 27

to him by his attorney.

28

- 4. That the respondent's license history and status as set forth at paragraph 2 of the Accusation are true and correct and that the respondent's address of record is as set forth in the caption of this Stipulation and Waiver.
- 5. That at the time of executing and filing the Accusation, Thomas O'Connor was the Executive Officer of the Board and filed the Accusation solely in his official capacity and not otherwise.
- 6. Respondent is fully aware of and has had explained to him by his attorney his right to a decision based on a hearing on the charges and allegations in Accusation No. W 181, his right to reconsideration, to appeal and any and all other rights which may be accorded to him under the California Administrative Procedure Act and the laws of the State of California as they may be related to Accusation No. W 181.
- 7. Respondent fully, voluntarily and after consulting with his attorney waives his right to a decision based on a hearing, reconsideration and appeal and any and all other rights which may be accorded to him under the California Administrative Procedure Act and the laws of the State of California as they may relate to Accusation No. W 181, except his right to petition for reinstatement after a period of not less than three years following the effective date of this voluntary surrender pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 2962.
- 8. All admissions of fact and conclusions of law contained in this Stipulation are made exclusively for this proceeding and any future proceeding between the Board of Psychology and the respondent and shall not be deemed to be admissions for any purpose in any other administrative, civil or criminal action, forum or proceeding. Respondent understands the nature of the charges alleged in the Accusation and that, if proven at hearing, the charges and allegations would constitute cause for imposing discipline upon his certificate as a psychologist. Respondent and his counsel are aware of each of respondent's rights, including the right to a hearing on the charges and allegations; respondent's right to confront and cross-examine witnesses who would testify against him; respondent's right to present evidence in his favor or to call witnesses in his behalf, or to so testify himself; respondent's right to contest the charges and allegations and any other rights which may be accorded him pursuant to the California

Administrative Procedure Act (Gov. Code, §11500 et seq.); his right to reconsideration, appeal to the superior court and to any other or further appeal; respondent understands that in signing this stipulation rather than contesting the accusation, he is enabling the Board to accept the voluntary surrender of his license without further process. For purposes of the settlement of the action pending against respondent in case No. 13-92-19559 and to avoid a lengthy administrative hearing that would impose severe economic hardship upon him, the emotional stain upon him and the patient alleged in the Accusation, as well as the risks associated with such a trial, respondent admits that, *if proven*, there is a factual and legal basis for the imposition of discipline by the Board of Psychology pursuant to the allegations, which are substantially related to the qualifications, functions or duties of a psychologist, of Accusation Number W-181. Therefore, while neither admitting nor denying the factual allegations of Accusation Number W-181, regarding respondent's care and treatment of patient K.B. in California, respondent stipulates to the jurisdiction of the Board of Psychology to enter as its Decision in this matter the Order contained in this Stipulation, Waiver and Order Thereon.

- 9. Respondent desires and agrees to surrender his psychologist's license to the Board, thereby relinquishing his right to practice psychology in the State of California effective upon adoption of this surrender and assignment of an effective date by the Board of Psychology.
- 10. Respondent specifically waives the renewal provisions of Business and Professions Code sections 2982, 2984 and 2986 and agrees that he will not apply to the Board to have his certificate renewed, restored, reissued or reinstated and will not apply for a new certificate for at least three (3) years after the effective date of this decision and that any such application shall be deemed a petition for reinstatement of the certificate and treated according to the provisions of Business and Professions Code section 2962 or any similar section that is in effect at the time of such an application.
- 11. Respondent expressly agrees that should he in the future petition for reinstatement of his certificate, the factual allegations of the First and Second Causes for Disciplinary Action contained in Accusation Number W-181 shall be deemed admitted.

- Board of Psychology to issue its order accepting the voluntary surrender of his license without further process. Respondent understands and agrees that Board staff and counsel for complainant may communicate directly with the Board of Psychology regarding this Stipulation, without notice to or participation by respondent. In the event that this Stipulation is rejected for any reason by the Board, it will be of no force or effect for either party. The Board will not be disqualified from further action in this matter by virtue of its consideration of this Stipulation.
- 13. Respondent clearly understands and agrees that by voluntarily agreeing to the surrender of his certificate of licensure by the Board for their formal acceptance, upon acceptance of the Stipulation by the Board, respondent understands that he will no longer be permitted to practice as a Psychologist in California, and also agrees to surrender and cause to be delivered to the Board both his license and any other certificate issued to him by them before the effective date of the decision.
- application for relicensure or reinstatement in the State of California, the Board shall treat it as a petition for reinstatement and that respondent must comply with all the laws, regulations and procedures for reinstatement of a revoked license in effect at the time the petition is filed, and all of the charges and allegations contained in Accusation No. W 181 will be deemed to be true, correct and admitted by respondent when the Board determines whether to grant or deny the petition. Further, for purposes of preservation of evidence, Investigative Report Number 1F 1997 81922 dated November 30, 1999 and documents, reports, letters and other records, identified as Attachments A and B, Exhibits 1 through 25 prepared by Senior Special Investigator Teri Bennett, and appended hereto as Exhibit B may be introduced at the reinstatement hearing and may be considered, as direct evidence, in deciding whether the certificate should be reinstated.

The above-described documents, clearly labeled, shall be submitted to the Board for inclusion in respondent's file immediately after the adoption of this stipulation as the Board's decision in this matter.

# EXHIBIT A

- 1		4		
1	BILL LOCKYER, Attorney General			
2	of the State of California ALFREDO TERRAZAS (SBN 78403)			
3	Deputy Attorney General			
	California Department of Justice 1515 Clay Street, 20th Floor			
4	Oakland, California 94512 Telephone: (510) 622-2220			
5	Facsimile: (510) 622-2121			
6	Attorneys for Complainant			
7	DEFORE !	NITE		
8	BEFORE THE BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS STATE OF CALIFORNIA			
9				
10				
11	In the Matter of the Accusation Against:	Case No. W181		
12	DAVID LAWRENCE POST, Ph.D., 2723 Crow Canyon Road, Suite 209	ACCUSATION		
13	San Ramon, CA 94583			
14	License No. DCV 7006			
15	License No. PSY 7886,			
	Respondent.			
16				
17				
18	THOMAS S. O'CONNOR, complain	nant herein, charges and alleges as follows:		
19	1. He is the Executive Officer of	of the Board of Psychology, State of		
20	California (hereinafter referred to as the "Board"), and makes these charges and allegations solely			
21	in his official capacity.			
22	LICENSE H	ISTORY		
23	2. On or about January 21, 198	3, respondent, David L. Post, Ph.D.		
24	(hereinafter referred to as "respondent"), was issued	License No. PSY 7886 by the Board of		
25	Psychology, authorizing himto practice psychology in the State of California. The license is			
26	currently in good standing and is renewed to June 30, 2000. The Board has taken no prior			
27	disciplinary action against this license.			
28	3. The incidents alleged herein occurred while respondent was licensed as a			

psychologist practicing in the State of California.

## **STATUTES AND REGULATIONS**

- 4. Section 2960 of the Business and Professions Code<sup>1</sup>/ states, in pertinent part, that the Board may suspend, revoke or impose probationary conditions on a licensee for unprofessional conduct, which is defined to include, but not be limited to, any of the following causes:
- (i) Violating any rule of professional conduct promulgated by the Board and set forth in regulations duly adopted under this chapter;
  - (j) Being grossly negligent in the practice of his or her profession;
- (k) Violating any of the provisions of this chapter or regulations duly adopted thereunder;
  - (n) The commission of any dishonest, corrupt or fraudulent act; and
- (o) Commencing January 1, 1999, until January 1, 2001, any act of sexual abuse, or sexual relations with a patient or former patient within two years following termination of therapy, or sexual misconduct which is substantially related to the qualifications, functions or duties of a psychologist or psychological assistant or registered psychologist.
- 5. Section 1382 of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations provides, in pertinent part, that every licensed psychologist shall include in his or her training for licensure, effective October 28, 1978, completed course work or training in human sexuality which meets the requirements of this section, including, but not limited to, the study of physiological-psychological and social-cultural variables associated with sexual identity, sexual behavior or sexual disorders. It is the intent of the board that all persons licensed to practice psychology have minimal training in human sexuality.
- 6. Section 1396.1 of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations provides, that it is recognized that a psychologist's effectiveness depends upon his or her ability to maintain sound interpersonal relations, and that temporary or more enduring problems in a

<sup>1.</sup> All statutory references are to the Business and Professions Code unless otherwise indicated.

psychologist's own personality may interfere with this ability and distort his or her appraisals of others. A psychologist shall not knowingly undertake any activity in which temporary or more enduring personal problems in the psychologist's personality integration may result in inferior professional services or harm to a patient or client. If a psychologist is already engaged in such activity when becoming aware of such personal problems, he or she shall seek competent professional assistance to determine whether services to the patient or client should be continued or terminated.

- 7. Section 125.3 provides, in pertinent part, that in any order issued in resolution of a disciplinary proceeding before any board within the Department of Consumer Affairs, the board may request the administrative law judge to direct a licentiate found to have committed any violation of the licensing act to pay a sum not to exceed the reasonable costs of the investigation and enforcement of the case.
- 8. Section 2964.6 provides that, an administrative disciplinary decision that imposes terms of probation may include, among other things, a requirement that the licensee who is being placed on probation pay the monetary costs associated with monitoring the probation.

#### ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

9. The American Psychological Association's, Ethical Principles of

Psychologists and Code of Conduct, effective December 1992 and in effect during the relevant period of time encompassed in this Accusation states, in pertinent part, as follows:

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

# Principle B: Integrity

"Psychologists seek to promote integrity in the science, teaching, and practice of psychology. In these activities psychologists are honest, fair, and respectful of others. In describing or reporting their qualifications, services, products, fees, research, or teaching, they do not make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive. Psychologists strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, needs, and limitations and the effect of these on their work. To the extent feasible, they attempt to clarify for relevant parties the roles they are performing and to function appropriately in accordance with those roles.

Psychologists avoid improper and potentially harmful dual relationships. (Emphasis added.)

## Principle E: Concern for Others' Welfare

Psychologists seek to contribute to the welfare of those with whom they interact professionally. In their professional actions, psychologists weigh the welfare and rights of their patients or clients, students, supervises, human research participants, and other affected persons, and the welfare of animal subjects of research. When conflicts occur among psychologists' obligations or concerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts and to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm.

Psychologists are sensitive to real and ascribed differences in power between themselves and others, and they do not exploit or mislead other people during or after professional relationships. (Emphasis added.)

#### ETHICAL STANDARDS

#### 1.17 Multiple Relationships

- (a) In many communities and situations, it may not be feasible or reasonable for psychologists to avoid social or other nonprofessional contacts with persons such as patients, clients, students, supervises, or research participants. Psychologists must always be sensitive to the potential harmful effects of other contacts on their work and on those persons with whom they deal. A psychologist refrains from entering into or promising another personal, scientific, professional, financial, or other relationship with such persons if it appears likely that such a relationship reasonable might impair the psychologist's objectivity or otherwise interfere with the psychologist's effectively performing his or her functions as a psychologist, or might harm or exploit the other party.
- (b) If a psychologist finds that, due to unforeseen factors, a potentially harmful multiple relationship has arisen, the psychologist attempts to resolve it with due

18.

regard for the best interests of the affected person and maximal compliance with the Ethics Code.

## 4.05 Sexual Intimacies With Current Patients or Clients.

Psychologists do not engage in sexual intimacies with current patients or clients.

4.07 Sexual Intimacies With Former Therapy Patients

- (a) Psychologists do not engage in sexual intimacies with a former therapy patient or client for at least two years after cessation or termination of professional services.
- (b) Because sexual intimacies with a former therapy patient or client are so frequently harmful to the patient or client, and because such intimacies undermine public confidence in the psychology profession and thereby deter the public's use of needed services, psychologists do not engage in sexual intimacies with former therapy patients and clients even after a two-year interval except in the most unusual circumstances. The psychologist who engages in such activity after the two years following cessation or termination of treatment bears the burden of demonstrating that there has been no exploitation in light of all relevant factors, including (1) the amount of time that has passed since therapy terminated, (2) the nature and duration of the therapy, (3) the circumstances of termination, (4) the patient's or client's personal history, (5) the patient's or client's current mental status, (6) the likelihood of adverse impact on the patient or client and others, and (7) any statements or actions made by the therapist during the course of therapy suggesting or inviting the possibility of a post-termination sexual or romantic relationship with the patient or client.

#### FIRST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

10. Patient K.B.<sup>2</sup> and her husband, R.B., first met respondent in March of 1995 when they consulted him regarding the possible treatment for their out-of-control son. Respondent treated their son for about two months after which the parent's placed him in a school in Maine. Thereafter, K.B. started individual treatment with respondent in July of 1995 to work through surfacing memories of childhood sexual abuse and incest which occurred from

<sup>2.</sup> Initials are used in place of actual names of the patients and full names will be disclosed to respondent pursuant to receipt of a request for Discovery.

2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

11. Patient K.B. was in therapy with respondent three times a week for 18 months (from **July 1995** through, at minimum, **February 1997**) when the sexual activity started. Many of the therapy/counseling hours were logged on the patient's cell phone and their home phones. A sexual relationship between patient K.B. and respondent started during approximately February of 1997, and lasted at least through the end of 1997.

- 12. R.B. could see an emotional bonding in August 1996 between his wife, K.B., and respondent. At this time, R.B. confronted his wife and asked her to stop seeing respondent, which she refused to do. Thereafter, in September 1997, R.B. requested their pastor, Ed Blake, counsel R.B. and his wife, K.B. During said counseling, K.B. disclosed she was having an affair but would not say with whom. Subsequently, however, patient K.B. told both her husband and their pastor that she and her therapist, respondent herein, had been sexually involved since February of 1997, having sexual intercourse approximately two times a week through December 1997.
- Patient K.B., he continued billing the family's insurance carrier for therapy sessions and patient/client K.B. continued to write respondent checks from her and her husband's joint checking account even though, according to Mr. B., "[Respondent] stated that they started to taper off the therapeutic aspects between February and April, 1997." The collection of Explanation of Benefits (EOB's) from the family's insurance company, Principal Mutual Life, indicates that Principal Mutual Life continued to make payments on bills from respondent's office through May of 1997.
- 14. In the summer of 1997 patient/client K.B. attempted suicide with an overdose of sleeping pills. She was rushed to a nearby hospital, had her stomach pumped and was admitted to a psychiatric hospital, Walnut Creek PCP. K.B. had driven herself to the Emergency Room at John Muir Hospital and while she was driving herself to the hospital, respondent was coaching her on the cell phone. While K.B. was a patient in the psychiatric unit at Walnut Creek PCP, Mr. B. passed respondent in the hallway.

18

19

20

10

11

12

13

21 22

23 24

25 26

27

28

15. In December 1997 Reverend Blake, the family's pastor, held a tape recorded interview with respondent and Mr. B. during which respondent admitted to having had a sexual affair with KB "for one to one and a half years". During that same meeting respondent also gave descriptions of his sharing details of his own personal life with KB during therapy sessions, descriptions of holding and hugging which took place during sessions, and of his allowing gift exchanges between the two of them. Additionally, during said meeting with the minister they also discussed fraudulent billing and respondent expressed concern regarding insurance fraud. In fact, on or about December 18, 1997 respondent made out a check to Mr. B. in the amount of \$1600.00, writing on the check: "Partial Restitution". Also in mid-December 1997, after KB told her husband, in the presence of Pastor Blake, that she wanted to reconcile her husband told her that she couldn't have any contact with respondent nor protect him. The day after Christmas Day 1997, KB told RB that she was leaving him and pursuing a relationship with respondent Thereafter, in January 1998, KB disclosed her affair to her children, (then ages 18, 16, and 9), formally separated from her husband that same month, and filed for divorce in February, 1998. Patient/client KB vehemently objected to having a complaint filed against respondent with the Board of Psychology and submitted an official written objection to the Board's subpoena for her psychiatric records and told her husband that if respondent got into trouble she would hold it against her husband.

16. Respondent's conduct as forth in paragraphs 10 through 15, inclusive, constitutes unprofessional conduct and gross negligence in the practice of psychology and is cause for disciplinary action pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 2960, subdivisions (i), (k) and (j). Respondent's ongoing sexual relationship with his patient KB represents an extreme departure from the standard of care of psychologists in the state of California. Ethics code, licensing regulations and clinical values of experienced psychologists in California all unanimously forbid therapist-patient sexual involvement. A client comes into therapy hoping that the therapist can ease his or her pain, believing he has the skill to do so. Whether it is the client who tries to sexualize the professional relationship or the therapist who makes the first move, it is still the therapist's responsibility to see that the sessions do not become

overtly erotic. The power differential between therapist and client is so great that a 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

2.7

therapist-client sexual affair can never be considered a relationship between equals. In addition to forbidding sexual contact between a psychologist and his client, the Ethics Code also charges psychologists with the obligation of avoiding harm towards their patients. If a potentially harmful situation with a patient does occur, the Code requires the psychologist to "...attempt to resolve it with due regard for the best interests of the affected person and maximal compliance with the Ethics Code." Clearly, he showed no regard for the best interest of his patient as he undertook and then continued the sexual relationship. He repeated his patient's early wound both by indulging in sex with her and then encouraging or allowing her to keep their sexual relationship secret, just as she had had to keep her brothers' sexual violation of her secret from her parents. Even when K.B. attempted suicide respondent did not consider that enough of a warning signal to take steps to end their sexual connection and find her other assistance to sort out her conflicts.

## SECOND CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- 17. The factual allegations found in paragraphs 10 through 15, herein above. are hereby incorporated by reference as if fully set forth in these words.
- 18. Respondent's conduct as forth in paragraphs 10 through 15, inclusive, constitutes sexual misconduct in the practice of psychology and is cause for discipline for unprofessional conduct pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 2960, subdivision(o).

Respondent's sexual involvement with his client was an extreme departure from the standard of care even if he interpreted their feelings as 'being in love' and even if he should end up marrying her. The Ethics Code and Psychology law are both clear: Sex with a client is unethical and unprofessional conduct. There are no exceptions in law or in ethics, no extenuating circumstances permitted to soften that standard.

Respondent either knew, or as an experienced clinician, should have known that a patient suffering from early sexual molestation would be especially harmed by replicating the incest in a forbidden therapist-patient sexual relationship.

28 ///

///

///

///

## THIRD CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- 19. The factual allegations found in paragraphs 10 through 15, herein above, are hereby incorporated by reference as if fully set forth in these words.
- 20. Respondent's conduct as forth in paragraphs 10 through 15, inclusive, constitutes the repeated commission of a dishonest, corrupt or fraudulent act in the practice of psychology and is cause for discipline for unprofessional conduct pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 2960, subdivision(n).

Respondent exhibited an extreme departure from the standard of care of psychologists in that he submitted bills to his client's insurance company for sessions of therapy when he met with KB for sex, not for therapy. It is a dishonest, corrupt and/or fraudulent act to charge for sessions not held or sessions not used for therapy.

All of respondent's extreme departures, sex with his client and charging the insurance company fraudulently, were repeated violations of ethics code and law. These intentional, ongoing violations add up to unprofessional conduct of a chronic, most serious nature.

WHEREFORE, complainant prays that a hearing be held and that the Board issue an order:

- 1. Revoking or suspending Psychology License PSY 7886, issued to David Lawrence Post, Ph.D.;
- 2. Ordering David Lawrence Post, Ph.D., to pay the Division the reasonable costs of the investigation and enforcement of this case, and if placed on probation, the costs of probation monitoring; and

Taking such other and further action as may be deemed proper and 3. appropriate.

DATED: February 1, 2000

THOMAS S. O'CONNOR
Executive Officer
Board of Psychology
Department of Consumer Affairs

Complainant

# **DECLARATION OF SERVICE BY CERTIFIED MAIL**

In the Matter of the Accusation against:

## David Lawrence Post, Ph.D.

No.: W-181

I, the undersigned, declare that I am over 18 years of age and not a party to the within cause; my business address is 1422 Howe Avenue, Sacramento, California 95825. I served a true copy of the attached:

#### **DECISION AND ORDER**

by mail on each of the following, by placing same in an envelope (or envelopes) addressed (respectively) as follows:

## NAME AND ADDRESS

CERT NO.

David Lawrence Post, Ph.D. 2723 Crow Canyon Rd., Ste. 209 San Ramon, CA 94583 Z 403 879 171

Alfredo Terrazas Office of the Attorney General 1515 Clay St., 20<sup>th</sup> Floor Oakland, CA 94512

David M. Galie, Esq. Freeman & Galie 711 VanNess Ave., Ste. 205 San Francisco, CA 94102

Each said envelope was then on, <u>June 8, 2000</u>, sealed and deposited in the United States mail at Sacramento, California, the county in which I am employed, as certified mail, with the postage thereon fully prepaid, and return receipt requested.

Executed on, <u>June 8, 2000</u>, at Sacramento, California. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

DECLARANT

Mary Laackmann

Enforcement Technician